DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 174 211 IR 007 485

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TITLE Library Instruction to EOP Students: A Case Study.
PUB DATE [78]
NOTE 9p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Disadvantaged Youth; *Educational Programs; *Integrated Curriculum; Library Cooperation; *Library Instruction; Library Role; Low Income Groups; Minority Groups

ABSTRACT

Since 1976, a 10-week, 1-credit formal course in library instruction has been taught to entering Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) students at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, as an integral part of their core curriculum. The curriculum for these disadvantaged students places emphasis upon communication processes--reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and faculty from the departments of English, history, speech communication, and the library coordinate their lectures, instructional strategies, and assignments during the quarter to insure an integrated learning experience for each student. Requirements for students in the library skills class do not differ significantly from those for non-EOP students; the course stresses "survival skills" for locating resources and methodically formulating a search strategy when approaching any topic for a term paper or report. Instructional strategies include use of audiovisual materials, demonstrations, discussion, educational games, guest speakers, individualized instruction, learning activity packages, lecture, problem solving, questioning, review and practice, self-paced material, and simulations. A list of references useful in developing this course is provided. (CMV)

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LIBRARY INSTRUCTION TO EOP STUDENTS:

A CASE STUDY

Ilene F. Rockman

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ABSTRACT

An area of formal library skills instruction often overlooked in academic settings is that which is geared to low income/minority students. The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, one of 19 publicly-supported California State University and College (CSUC) campuses has recognized the need for a 10-week credit course in library instruction to be an integral part of the core curriculum for all entering EOP students. These students are ones who have the determination and motivation to succeed in an academic setting, but have not been able to recognize their potentials due to cultural, economic, educational, environmental, physical, or social needs. Committed to the special circumstances of EOP students are faculty from the departments of English, history, speech communication, and the library who coordinate their lectures, instructional strategies, and assignments during the quarter to insure an integrated learning experience for each student. Since 1976, the EOP department has pursued the goal of providing an integrated subject matter/learning curriculum for all entering EOP students, and library instruction has played an active role in the successful realization of this goal.

Lubans has edited the trends, innovations, and directions of library instruction (1974, 1978), Kirkendall edits a regular column on bibliographic instruction for the JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP, Rader publishes a yearly column on library orientation and instruction in REFERENCE SERVICES REVIEW, annual conferences such as the Southeastern Conference on Approaches to Bibliographic Instruction and the Conference on Library Orientation for Academic Libraries occur to provide librarians opportunities to present papers and share ideas, and national organizations such as the American Library Association's Library Instruction Round Table and the Bibliographic Instruction Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries have been established to give recognition to the responsibility which librarians have in educating their users.

However, a scarcity of information occurs in the literature linking bibliographic instruction and minority students. Only Dudley (1970), Perry (1974), Shaughnessy (1975), and Shipps (1971) have addressed the concerns of library education for minority students.

It is the purpose of this discussion to share the practical experiences of one academic library educator who teaches minority students in the hopes of generating interest among other library educators, especially those who teach library skills to a similar population.

Since 1976, a 10-week, 1-credit formal course in basic library skills has been taught to EOP (Educational Opportunity Program) students at one of the 19 California State University and College campuses. The instructor of the course is an integral member of the core curriculum

team composed of faculty from the departments of English, history, speech communication, and library.

EOP at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, is a program designed to recruit, select, retain, and graduate low-income and minority students who do not meet the university entrance requirements, but have the motivation and academic potential to succeed. These are students who have the potential to perform satisfactorily on the college level, but who have not been able to realize their potentials because of cultural, economic, educational, environmental, physical, or social needs.

The core curriculum, of which library instruction plays an active role, places emphasis upon communication processes -- reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

During the 1976-77 academic year, the EOP program at Cal Poly admitted 241 students of which 125 were first year students who enrolled in the core courses -- English (Intensive Composition), Speech Communication (Principles of Speech and Essentials of Discussion), History (American Democracy and World Affairs), and Library (Library Instruction).

The core aspect of the program underscores the fact that entering EOP students have academic and social needs which can be met most effectively in classes of homogeneous grouping. Rapport, commaraderie, and comradeship can develop easier in core classes, which, ultimately, contributes to an improved learning climate.

Requirements

Requirements for students in the library skills class do not differ significantly from requirements for non-EOP students. Because

the EOP students are "tracked" into taking a specific library class at registration, they have the support of each other in the classroom. Performance is assessed through pre- and post-testing, weekly assignments, class participation, and the completion of an annotated bibliography on a subject of the students' choice.

Basically, the course stresses "survival skills" for locating resources, and methodically formulating a search strategy when approaching any topic for a term paper or report.

Each week the class is introduced to a different aspect of resource information, and students are expected to keep pace with the workload. Beginning with a general walking tour of the library, the students are exposed to the areas of LC classification, periodical and newspaper indexes, abstracts and book digests, reference materials, government documents and maps, nonprint materials, and specialized library materials (e.g. Library of American Civilization files, ERIC microfiche).

Because the students take the library instruction class in conjunction with their other core classes, coordination of assignments with other instructors is possible.

A discussion of SPEECH INDEX proves to be useful to students who are studying the Lincoln-Douglas debates in their history class, and to those who must find material for a five minute oration in their speech communication class.

Furthermore, when English assignments require an essay on a specific work of literature, the stduents are able to locate the work in the library's collection, as well as literary history and criticism about it.

In explaining the different types of reference works, sources such as AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY: A BIBLIOGRAPHY (ABC-Clio, 1974) are used to illustrate the principles of bibliography, and the ENCYCLOPEDIC DIRECTORY OF ETHNIC ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES (Libraries Unlimited, 1975) helps to illuminate the concept of a directory. Not only do examples such as these provide immediate identification and relevancy for the students, but the sources help to maintain a level of motivation and excitement about the library's collection.

Instructional Strategies

An important aspect of any teaching experience is the instructional strategy employed. The type of instruction used will set the tone of the learning environment. Variety of strategies recognize the fact that all students do not learn in the same way or at the same pace.

For the EOP students, it has proven to be successful to vary the method of information transfer among the following strategies:

Audiovisual aids--color slides, ITV, sound filmstrips, color transparencies
Demonstration
Discussion -- both small and large group
Educational games
Guest speakers
Individualized instruction
Learning activity packages
Lecture
Problem solving
Questioning
Review and practice
Self-paced material
Simulations

The development of a preparation form for each class meeting in which the concepts to be taught are identified along with the observable student performance objectives, instructional strategy to be used, material needed (both software and hardware), and method of evaluation precede each

class session. Both short-term and long-term learning are important in the learning process, and are emphasized.

Supplementing the cognitive processes that occur in the classroom, is a personal interview/counseling session conducted between the librarian and the student. This session helps to clarify the literature search assignment, and provides a non-threatening means for each student to "know" the librarian. The empathetic exchange between the student and the instructor-librarian outside of the classroom setting tells the student that he or she is important, and has the ability to succeed.

Evaluation

Student evaluation occurs throughout the course, and is concentrated at the end of the quarter. Both the library instructor (through course evaluation sheets) and the EOP department (through peer counselors) receive student input about the course. In addition, the EOP department evaluates the entire core curriculum in terms of homogeneous grouping, course offerings, and student performances.

Revisions for the 1977-78 and 1978-79 years have included the addition of two more core classes, one in Education (Personal Assessment for Education Success) and the other in Psychology (General Psychology).

Conclusion

In summary, library instruction to EOP students at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo is an integral part of the core curriculum for first year students. Both cognitive and affective skills are focused upon, with the ultimate goal being the long-term retention of library skills which can be translated and applied to any learning situation.

Sources useful to the instructor in developing this library instruction course have included:

The Cal-State L.A. Chicano Student: A Study of Academic Performance of EOP Chicanos, Non-EOP Chicanos, and Anglos, and the Relationship of Attitudes to Academic Performance. Los Angeles: Educational Opportunity Program, California State College, 1971.

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